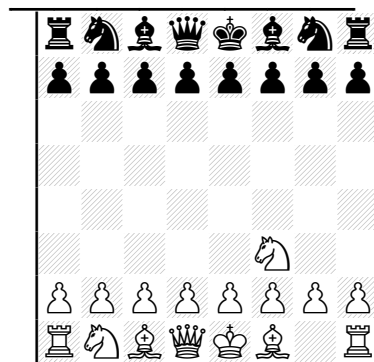


Réti Opening

[A04–07, A09, A11–14]

Written by GM Tony Kosten



Named after Richard Réti (1889-1929), this opening was born out of his ideas, and that of the hypermodern school. White avoids immediate pawn occupation of the centre, preferring to control it from afar with his pieces. Traditionally, this can lead to slow, manoeuvring games, where both sides develop their pieces and wait for the right moment to strike in the centre, or it can lead to positions where Black attempts to construct a centre, and White to attack, and destroy it. Often this can resemble reversed versions of various black defences, with the advantage that White has an important extra tempo, of course.

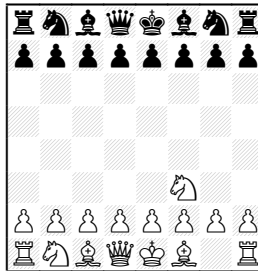
It is a very flexible move, and nowadays many players use 1 Nf3 as a means of obtaining other openings, whilst avoiding various dangerous possibilities. For instance, after 1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4, White reaches an English Opening, but having avoided 1...e5. Players who come into this category are Kramnik, Krashenkov, Speelman, and many others.

'Thoroughbred' Réti players are those who play the opening as it was originally intended, attempting to develop their pieces without touching their e, and d-pawns, with bishops on b2, and g2. They attempt to snipe away at any black pawn centre and will keep their central pawn thrusts in reserve for as long as possible. This is a very un-theoretical approach, indeed, apart from a few ideas you don't really need to know any theory at all. Players who come into this group include Akopian, Salov, Ribli, and Vaganian.

All the games given in [blue](#) can be accessed via ChessPub.exe, simply head for their respective ECO code.

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2 b3 Réti/Larsen [A06]

2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 Réti without c4 [A07]

2...c6

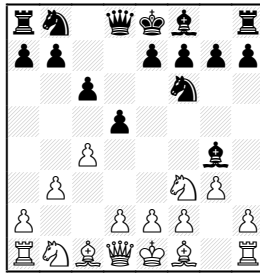
2...e6 3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗c7 (4...dxc4 5 ♖a4+ Réti-...e6, 4...dxc4 [A13]) 5 0-0 0-0 6 b3 Réti-...e6, 4...♗c7 [A14]

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3 g3 ♘f6 4 ♗g2 Réti's Opening-1 c4 c6 [A11]

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5 ♔g2

Réti–Capablanca & Lasker with b3 [A12]

Press F5 to toggle the Navigation Pane, then click on the appropriate bookmark to go straight to that section.

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Réti – Various Black replies [A04]

Last updated: 02/08/03 by TonyK

1 ♖f3

As every time a pawn is moved, squares are weakened, this is one of the most flexible moves on the board, not a single white pawn is committed!

1...c5

Offering White the chance to play a Sicilian.

1...f5 Whilst Dutch practitioners might like to think that they can play this first move against the English, and Réti, as well as against 1 d4, it does not necessarily lead to the position that they expect. 2 g3 (2 e4!? fxe4 3 ♖g5 e5! this is the simplest way to draw the fangs of White's Gambit, 4 d3 e3 5 ♗xe3 ♗e7 6 ♜f3 ♜c6 7 d4 [Stocek,J–Hoang Thang,T/FSGM Aug, Budapest HUN 1996](#). 2 d4 leads to a Dutch.) 2...♜f6 3 ♗g2 (3 c4 g6 4 b4!? ♗g7 5 ♗b2 develops the queenside more quickly, [Vaganian,R–Heidrich,M/Tegernsee GER 2002](#)) 3...g6 (3...d6 4 c4 g6 5 b4!? just like the 'b4 against the KI' line we have examined, [Vaganian,R–Kuczynski,R/Godesberg GER 2002](#).) 4 0-0 ♗g7 5 d3 0-0 6 e4! this is one of the problems with playing the Dutch against a Réti set-up, White can oppose the f5-pawn directly, see [Aronian,L–Jorge Bort,E/Linares ESP 2000](#).

1...e6 2 g3 b6 3 ♗g2 ♗b7 4 0-0 f5 5 d3 ♜f6 6 ♜bd2 ♗e7 7 e4! An excellent exhibition of energy emanating from the e-pawn! [Di Lazzaro,G–Barletta,A/Estensi ITA 2001](#).

1...d6 2 c4 (2 d4 ♗g4 is the Wade System, but in the actual game White has a sneaky idea in mind involving getting his queen out to b3 after playing 2 c4.) 2...♗g4 3 ♖b3 [Schmitt,A–Pribyl,J/Altensteig 1990](#), just watch and see what happens next...

2 g3

2 b3 By playing this move now, White manages to avoid the main 1. b3 lines where Black can play an immediate 1...e5. 2...d6 3 e3! Probably the most flexible move, for as Black will block the a1-h8 diagonal with ...e5 it makes sense not to develop the c1-bishop straight-away. 3...e5 4 ♗b5+ ♜d7 5 0-0 f5 6 d4 [Speelman,J–Ward,C/London ENG 1999](#).

2...♜c6 3 ♗g2

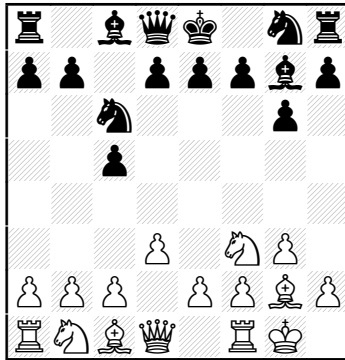
3 c4 e5 The solid Botvinnik System. 4 ♜c3 g6 5 a3 ♗g7 6 b4!? Is this really possible? Certainly it is with the white bishop on g2, instead of the knight on f3, but this

position gives Black extra resources. 6...e4 Driving the knight to the rim, as in [Miles,A-Oral,T/Varadero CUB 2000](#).

3...g6 4 d3

Or 4 c3!? An interesting idea, White wants to transpose into a KID formation, 4...g7 5 d4 cxd4 6 cxd4 d5 7 c3 e6!? (Normal would now be 7...f6 when a symmetric King's Indian is reached, with a small plus for White, but Black prefers to avoid this by keeping a hold on e5.) 8 f4, [Miles,A-Andersson,U/Las Palmas 1980](#), a dark-squared masterpiece!

4...g7 5 0-0



5...e6

A position that often arises via various move-orders from the French, or Sicilian. Playing an immediate Botvinnik with 5...e5 is quite reasonable. 6 e4 f6 7 [Radlovacki,J-Micic,C/Pancevo YUG 2003](#).

6 e4 f6 7 e1

White would like to play c3, and d4, to expand in the centre, but he has other possibilities: 7 bd2 0-0 8 e1 d6 9 a4 b6 10 c4 [Malisov,B-Psakhis,L/Ramat Aviv ISR 2000](#).

7 c3 This takes us into the territory of a Closed Sicilian. 7...0-0 8 e3 d4 More or less forced, as (8...d6 9 d4 is nice for White.) 9 d2 e6 [Jurkovic,A-Pavasovic,D/Pula CRO 2000](#).

7 c3 may be more flexible, 7...0-0 8 d4 cxd4 9 cxd4 d5 10 e5 f5! [Datu,I-Watson,J/Saitek US Masters, Hawaii USA 1998](#).

7...d6!

Black stops any white expansion in the centre with e5, then next move he hinders d4. So White has to look to the queenside to gain space, but it is all pretty harmless.

After 7...d5 8 e5 the rook on e1 performs a useful function in defending the pawn on e5.

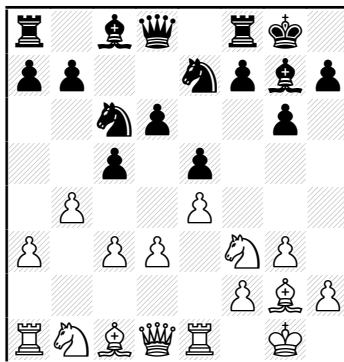
8 c3 e5!

Despite losing a tempo, this is a good time to play this, as the white rook may turn-out to be misplaced on the e-file.

9 a3

9 ♖a3 0-0 10 ♙e3 White prepares d3-d4, but Black's piece deployment is very efficient and not surprisingly he benefits the most from the opening of the centre, 10...h6 11 ♔d2 ♗h7 12 d4 exd4! This capture rather than c5xd4 is often the best idea for Black in this pawn centre- Black activates his bishop straightaway, 13 cxd4 d5! [Van Mil,J-Gurevich,M/Heiligenhaus GER 2001](#).

9...0-0 10 b4



10...a6

The least committal move, stopping b5.

10...h6 The computer adopts the routine plan of ...h6 and ...Be6, but Leko's subtle play seems to render this dubious. 11 ♖bd2 ♙e6 12 ♖c4 b5 [Leko,P-FRITZ on Primergy K800/Frankfurt GER 2000](#).

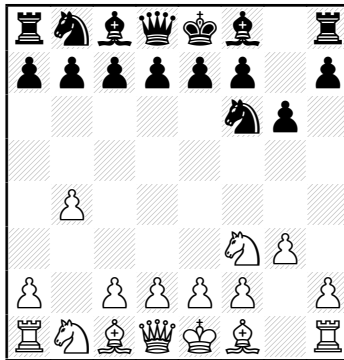
11 ♖bd2 h6 12 ♖b1

[Ansell,S-Nunn,J/Birmingham ENG 2000](#).

Réti – 1 Nf3 Nf6 [A05]

Last updated: 14/04/02 by TonyK

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 g3 g6 3 b4!?



This is favoured by Angus Dunnington in his book on the Réti. White gains space on the queenside, and prepares to counter the pressure of the g7–bishop along the a1–h8 diagonal.

3...g7 4 Bb2 0-0 5 Bg2 d6

5...d5 6 0-0 c6 is another sound approach, [Narciso Dublan,M–Pedersen,J/Andorra AND 2001](#).

6 0-0 e5

Black gains a foothold in the centre, and erects a dark–squared pawn chain to stymie the white b2–bishop.

7 c4

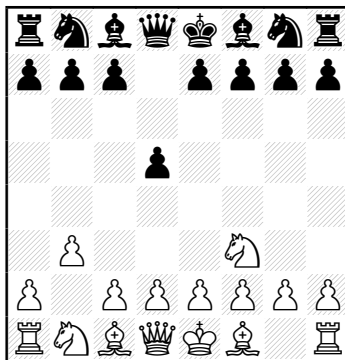
This move is the most natural, with a transposition to the English, see [Hoffmann,M–Wemmers,X/NED–chT, Hengelo NED 2000](#).

Actually, Dunnington prefers the move 7 d3.

Réti/Larsen [A06]

Last updated: 26/02/03 by TonyK

1 ♖f3 d5 2 b3



This might seem the best time to play this move, after having controlled e5, so that Black cannot reply ...e5 and close the a1-h8 diagonal. However, there is also a disadvantage.

2 e4?! a 'reversed Budapest' is considered in the [Tennyson Gambit](#) game.

2...♗f6

Otherwise, 2...c5 is a solid choice, 3 e3 with a reversed Queen's Indian structure. (White has to be careful, the natural 3 ♗b2?! allows 3...f6! and Black might already be better, the famous Petrosian, T–Fischer,R 6th match game, from Buenos Aires 1971, continuing 4 c4 d4 5 d3 e5)

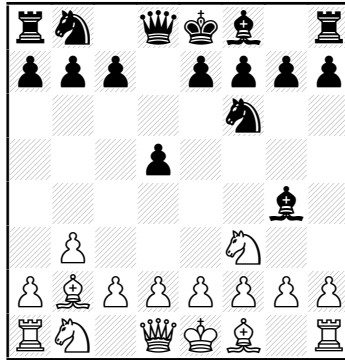
a) 3...g6 is reasonable, 4 ♗b2 ♗f6 5 ♗b5+ (Normal, although Kramnik preferred 5 c4 when he had this position.) 5...♗d7 6 ♗xf6!? Played in Trompovsky style, and reminiscent of Hodgson,J–Speelman,J, also to be found here, 6...exf6 7 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8 0-0 [Speelman,J–Sermek,D/Leon ESP 2001](#).

b) 3...♗c6 is normal, although it does give White a tempo over a Nimzo position, 4 ♗b5 ♗g4 5 h3 ♗h5 6 ♗a3!? [Speelman,J–Cooper,J/West Bromwich ENG 2002](#).

c) 3...a6!? Why not? Black plays a reverse 4 a3 Queen's Indian will the extra tempo change anything? 4 ♗b2 ♗c6 5 d4 cxd4 6 ♗xd4 [Speelman,J–Nikolic,P/Solingen GER 2001](#).

2...♘g4 3 ♘b2 ♘xf3 4 exf3 e6 5 d4 g6! A strong new move, Black intends to change the dark-squared bishops, before exploiting his structural plus. 6 ♘d2 ♘g7 7 f4 c5!?
[Taimanov,M-Volzhin,A/St Petersburg 1998.](#)

3 ♘b2 ♘g4



Here Black tries to play Capablanca's variation against the Réti, and is ready to concede the bishop pair by capturing a knight on f3 to disable the white pawn structure. 3...e6 is a solid option, 4 c4 ♘e7 5 e3 see [Arvind,S-Ramesh,R/Mumbai IND 2003.](#)

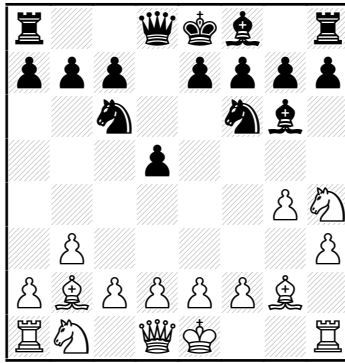
4 ♘h4!?

White finds a novel move to avoid the doubled pawns

4 ♘xf6!? White amazingly transposes into a 'Trompovsky-style' position! 4...gxf6 5 e3 ♘g7 6 h3 ♘xf3!? another surprising move, Black voluntarily concedes one of his bishops, 7 ♗xf3 f5 8 d4 c5 logical play, Black is softening the white queenside dark squares, weakened by White's first move, and left without a defender by his fourth-
[Hodgson,J-Speelman,J/Millfield ENG 2000.](#)

4 e3 is the standard line.

4...♘c6 5 h3 ♘h5 6 g4 ♘g6 7 ♘g2



Black has a solid position, with good development, but White is probably happy as he has two well-placed bishops, see [Blatny,P–Narciso Dublan,M/Budapest HUN 1999](#).

Réti without c4 [A07]

Last updated: 03/07/03 by TonyK

1 ♖f3

Here we see mostly the Capablanca System, introduced by the Cuban World Champion in 1925, where Black plays his c8–bishop to g4, and also Lasker's System, used by the previous World champion to beat Réti himself in New York 1924, when the light–squared bishop comes to f5.

1...d5 2 g3 ♖f6

Alternatives:

Black can also try to make–do without this move for a while: 2...c6 3 ♕g2 Many players, led by Shirov, and Chernin, have shown the interest of playing an immediate 3...♕g4 here, so that the king's knight might go to e7. 4 c4 (4 d3 ♖d7 5 ♖bd2 e6 6 0-0 ♕d6 7 e4 ♖e7 This is the extra option I mentioned, rather than play 7...♖f6, and have to worry about an eventual Pe5, forking two pieces. 8 ♖e1 ♕h5!?) Normally Black only plays this in reaction to White's h3, see [Ubilava,E–Van der Wiel,J/Elgoibar ESP 1998.](#)) 4...e6 (4...dxc4!?) This is an odd time to capture on c4, normally Black does this with his knight on f6, instead. 5 ♖a3! ♖d5 6 ♖c2 ♕e6 7 0-0 ♖d7 8 ♖c3! This is a strong, and far from obvious, innovation, White simply controls the a1–h8 diagonal to play ♖d4 (or ♖e5), look at the follow–up in [Maherramzade,J–Vladimirov,E/Abu Dhabi UAE 2001.](#)) 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♖b3 ♖b6 7 ♖c2 White withdraws his queen, he has no wish to play an equal endgame, and hopes to gain a tempo on the black queen later–on. 7...♖f6 [Vaganian,R–Jussupow,A/Istanbul TUR 2000.](#)

2...g6 A rare, if quite interesting, line. 3 c4 White attacks the black centre immediately. 3...c6 4 ♖a4! d4! This is the most ambitious reply. 5 b4 ♖d7 6 ♕b2 e5 7 e3 ♕g7! Black is not prepared to concede the centre, this is examined in the superb game [Lputian,S–Ivanchuk,V/Montecatini Terme ITA 2000.](#)

2...♖c6 To play ...e5. 3 ♕g2 (This line commonly arises from 1 g3. 3 d4 transposes to [D02].) 3...e5 4 d3 ♖f6 5 0-0 White has a classical Pirc position, with an extra tempo. 5...♕e7 and:

a) 6 c3 This is another Pirc plan 'hijacked' by White. This time he will prepare the e4–move with ♖c2, and ♖bd2, but b4 is also on the cards. 6...0-0 7 ♖c2 ♕f5 8 ♖bd2 e4! (8...♖d7 9 e4 is less accurate, [Dzindzichashvili,R–Ljubojevic,L/Tilburg 1985](#)) 9 ♖h4 exd3 10 exd3 ♕e6 with good play for Black, [Fridman,D–Godena,M/Istanbul TUR 2003.](#)

- b) 6 ♖g5 White follows another plan used by Black, with colours reversed. He hopes to play a favourable e4. 6...♗c6 7 ♘c3 0-0 8 e4 [Hickl,J–Hort,V/Dortmund 1989](#), White invites the reply ...d4 when a closed KI position is reached.
- c) 6 c4 The traditional flanking blow, White has only allowed Black to set-up a centre, so that he can attack it. 6...dxc4 A sensible, if not overly ambitious reply. 7 dxc4 ♜xd1 8 ♞xd1 ♗c6 9 b3 [Hennigan,M–Chandler,M/Birmingham ENG 1999](#).
- 2...♗g4 This is rather like a reversed Tromp, the idea is to be able to avoid the move ...c6 in some lines, and therefore accelerate the kingside development. 3 ♗g2 (3 ♘e5!? I suppose this must be the critical test of an early ...♗g4, 3...♗f5 4 ♗g2 f6!? very ambitious, planning to set-up a strong centre whilst gaining time on the knight, 5 ♘f3 [Romanishin,O–Sulypa,A/Lvov UKR 2001](#)) 3...♘d7 Possibly threatening ...e5. 4 c4 e6 5 cxd5 (5 d3 keeps more tension, 5...c6 6 0-0 ♗xf3!? 7 ♗xf3 d4 Black plays a similar plan to that successfully applied by his compatriot in [Pigusov,E–Zhang Zhong](#), and later in [Loginov,V–Grischuk,A](#), but without gaining a tempo on the bishop (see [A11] for both these games), [Pigusov,E–Zhang Pengxiang/Moscow RUS 2001](#).) 5...exd5 6 0-0 c6 [Markowski,T–Aleksandrov,A/Saint Vincent ITA 2000](#).

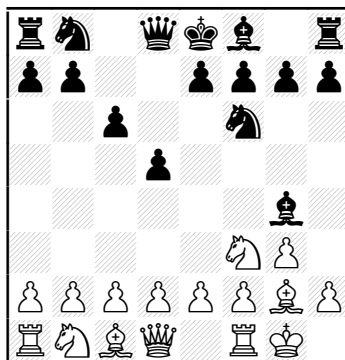
3 ♗g2 c6

- 3...♗f5 Lasker's move. Again, Black builds a central pawn wedge, after bringing his queen's bishop to an active square. This time, however, the bishop fights to stop White from expanding with e4. 4 d3 e6 5 c4 White can also play for e4 as in the note to the next move. 5...c6 6 b3 ♗e7 7 ♗b2 [Slobodjan,R–Dautov,R/Lippstadt GER 2000](#).

4 0-0

- 4 d3 is less flexible, 4...♘bd7 5 0-0 e5 6 b3 ♗d6 with a good game for Black, [Ubilava,E–Rasch,H/Linares ESP 2003](#).

4...♗g4



Reaching the key position in this line, this is Capablanca's System where Black is ready to continue ...e6, f8–bishop moves, and castles, with a harmonious position.

4...♙f5 Lasker's System, 5 d3 h6 6 ♘fd2!? planning an immediate e4, see [Cornette,M-Payen,A/Sautron FRA 2003](#).

5 d3 ♘bd7 6 ♘bd2

Instead of playing for c4, which would lead us to the section [A11], White goes for e4. The drawback of this is that the f3-knight will then be pinned by the g4-bishop, but this piece can have its own problems.

6 c4 e6 7 ♙e3 White wants to next play Qb3 without allowing ...Qb6. (7 b3 is [A11].) 7...♙d6 8 ♚b3 [Frois,A-Dominguez,L/Lisbon Open, Portugal 2000](#).

6...e5

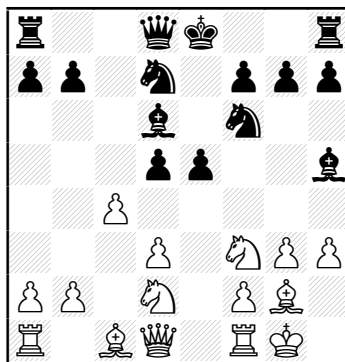
As White has not made any effort to attack the black centre, with c4, Black boldly constructs a full centre.

6...e6 is a solid alternative, 7 b3 ♙c5 8 ♙b2 0-0 9 a3 a5 10 e4 b5 this move, gaining space on the queenside, is often seen in such positions, the weakening of c6 is the only drawback, see [Sasikiran,K-Anand,V/Hyderabad IND 2002](#).

7 h3 ♙h5 8 e4 ♙d6

Capturing on e4 is common, but is less ambitious, as it concedes the c4-square to White. 8...dxe4 9 dxe4 ♙e7 A solid choice, leaving the c5-square open for the later manoeuvre ...Nc5-e6, controlling the d4-square. 10 a4! A useful precaution, White hopes to put paid to any possibility of Black playing a later ...b5, the c4-square will provide a good post for a white knight. 10...a5 11 ♚e2 A successful new twist for White here is considered in [Istratescu,A-Torre,E/Elista RUS 1998](#).

9 exd5 cxd5 10 c4



Trying to break the black centre.

10 g4!? ♙g6 11 ♘h4 where White takes the two bishops but loosens his kingside, is seen in the game [Azmaiparashvili,Z-Shirov,A/Dubai UAE 2002](#).

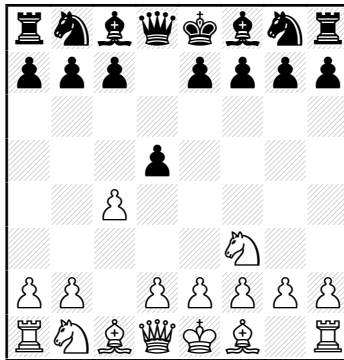
10...0-0

[Bricard,E-Kosten,A/Toulon 1999](#), where I introduced a strong move for Black.

Réti 2 c4 – 2...d4, 2...dxc4 [A09]

Last updated: 29/05/03 by TonyK

1 ♖f3 d5 2 c4



White immediately sets about attacking Black's central d–pawn. This often transposes to other lines should Black defend d5 by 2...c6 (see [A11], for instance).

2...d4

A natural advance aimed at cramping White, but at the risk of over exposing his centre, and falling behind in development. White has various continuations that all imitate reversed Benoni–type structures, with the advantage of an extra tempo.

The alternative is: 2...dxc4 Although this might appear to be something of a concession, exchanging a central pawn for a wing pawn, it does allow Black to avoid the pressure on d5, and should be reasonable, by comparison with the QGA. 3 e3 normal, aiming for a QGA. (However, just recently a new move has stolen the limelight, the surprising, and aggressive, 3 e4!? c5 Black immediately takes control of the d4 square, weakened by White's third move. 4 ♙xc4 ♜c6 5 0-0 e6 6 ♜c3 a6 7 d3 ♜f6!? 8 e5 White does not need to be asked twice, but immediately grabs more space in the centre. The e5–pawn will be used to attack the black kingside, see [Krasenkow,M–Volzhin,A/MK Cafe Cup, Koszalin POL 1998](#). 3 ♜a3 is perhaps the most popular.) 3...♜f6 (3...♜c6!? is perfectly reasonable, Black wants to play ...e5 with a Sicilian–type position with colours reversed, 4 ♙xc4 e5 5 ♙c2!? [Huzman,A–Maryasin,B/ISR 2002](#)) 4 ♙xc4 natural, although (4 ♜a3!? e6 5 ♜xc4 led to a crushing White attack in the marvellous game [Nogueiras,J–David,V/Cappelle la Grande FRA 2003](#)) 4...e6 5

0-0 one advantage of playing a Réti move—order against Queen's Gambit Accepted players, is that you can delay d4, to keep them guessing, (5 d4 is a QGA, of course.) 5...c5 6 ♖e2 a6 7 ♙b3 b5!/? Zvjaginsev,V–Svetushkin,D/Linares ESP 2000.

3 g3

The most flexible.

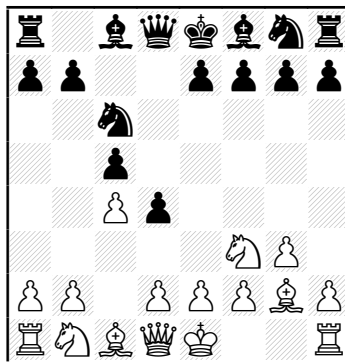
3 b4 is also a good choice, advancing immediately on the queenside, and obtaining a Benko Gambit–style position, without losing a pawn! 3...f6 Played to prop–up his centre. 4 e3 e5 5 c5!/? Termed 'the modern approach' by Dunnington, in his book on the Réti, White opens the a2–g8 diagonal and gains space on the queenside. However, it might simply be a mistake! 5...d3!! A stunner! If Black can get away with this provocative move, then he will probably be winning— the white kingside pieces will be to escape the trap, have a look at Gabriel,C–Korchnoi,V/Zurich SUI 1999.

3...c5

3...g6 Fianchettoing the king's bishop has a good theoretical reputation, but Black often suffers because of his lack of control over the a3–f8 diagonal. 4 d3 ♙g7 5 ♙g2 e5 6 b4 ♘d7!/? 7 ♘bd2 ♘h6!/? Another original development. 8 0-0 An example of the powerful queenside, and light–square, initiative that White can easily obtain here is shown in Anand,V–Svidler,P/Wijk aan Zee NED 1999.

3...♘c6 is an important alternative, 4 ♙g2 e5 5 d3 (5 0-0 ♘f6 6 b4!/? is interesting, Matamoros Franco,C–Vallejo Pons,F/Lanzarote ESP 2003) 5...♘f6 6 0-0 a5 7 e3 the logical reaction, as Black hasn't bolstered d4 with his c–pawn it makes sense to attack it, Speelman,J–Koneru,H/Torquay ENG 2002, a brilliant attacking game.

4 ♙g2 ♘c6



5 0-0

5 d3 e5 6 0-0 ♖f6 7 e3 ♗e7 8 exd4 cxd4 The most ambitious, 9 b4!? Clearly critical,
[Lima,D–Vescovi,G/Brasilia BRA 2000](#).

5...♖f6 6 e3 e5 7 exd4 exd4 8 d3 ♗e7 9 ♗f4

An important part of White's plan. He needs to exchange a piece, as he has less space, and at the same time, open the h1-a8 diagonal.

9...0-0 10 ♖e5

[Anastasian,A–Ponomariov,R/Batumi GEO 1999](#).

Réti's Opening – 1 c4 c6 [A11]

Last updated: 02/08/03 by TonyK

This section considers solid yet popular lines against the Réti involving ...c6. These systems have been around almost since Réti himself first played 1 ♘f3 – Black tries to erect a light-squared wall of pawns to hinder White's g2-bishop, often after first bringing his queen's bishop to the business side of it.

1 c4

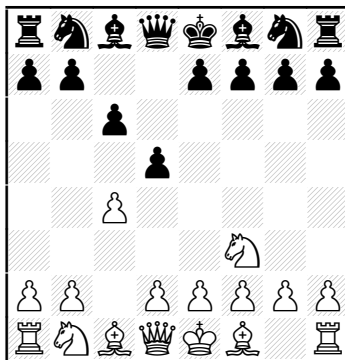
This is the 'official' move order, but these games arise more often from 1 ♘f3 d5 (or 1... ♘f6 2 g3 d5 3 c4) 2 c4

1...c6 2 ♘f3

To control e5.

2 g3 allows Black to play ...e5, 2... ♘f6 (2...d5 3 ♙g2 e5 4 d4!? Transposing into a type of Keres system. 4...dxc4 5 dxe5 ♚a5+ 6 ♘d2 Lauvsnes,A–Grotnes,N/Langesund NOR 2001, a spectacular victory for White.) 3 b3!? (3 ♙g2 d5 4 b3 e5 5 d3? almost loses for White, see Salman,J–Fridman,D/Southampton BER 2003 for the gruesome continuation) 3...e5 4 ♙b2 e4 gave Black no problems in Ehlvest,J–Kasparov,G/Moscow RUS 2002.

2...d5



2...f5 3 d4 e6? Black wants to play the Stonewall but he is confused by White's move order. 4 d5! Of course. Note however that if White had played g3 rather than Nf3 then Black's move order might have been reasonable: he could have answered 4 d5 with

cx d5 followed the bypassing e5 and so avoided serious damage to his centre. 4...cx d5 5 cx d5 ♖a5+?! 6 ♘c3 Black is in big trouble, [Mohr,G–Orel,S/Ljubljana CRO 2000](#).

3 g3

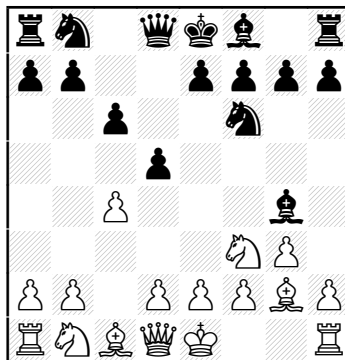
The most usual, White fianchettoes his king's bishop.

3 e3 is interesting: 3...♘f6

a) 4 ♖c2!? If White wishes to play this way, then this is an interesting move order, he defers ♘c3 so that he may keep a hold on the e5-square, and also stops ...♗f5, or ...♗g4 (because of the reply ♘e5). 4...e6 (4...a6 is a sensible Slav move, stopping a white piece going to b5, and possibly preparing a later ...b5, 5 h3!? directed against ...♗g4, [Gurevich,M–Bareev,E/Cap d'Agde FRA 2002](#) 4...g6!? aims to fianchetto the king's bishop, 5 b3 ♗g7 6 ♗b2 0-0 7 ♗e2 see [Gurevich,M–Dreev,A/Bastia FRA 2002](#), which also examines Black's third move alternatives.) 5 b3 ♗e7 6 ♗b2 0-0 7 ♖g1!? White simply prepares the move g4 with this surprising innovation. 7...♘bd7 8 g4 [Gurevich,M–Wegerle,J/Pardubice CZE 2000](#).

b) 4 ♘c3 4...e6 (4...a6 5 b3 ♗g4 6 ♗b2 ♘bd7 7 h3 ♗xf3 The solid approach. 8 ♖xf3 e6 9 g4!? Vaganian's aggressive idea, adding a space advantage to White's bishop pair, but in [Nogueiras,J–Ehlvest,J/New Delhi IND 2000](#) this backfired badly.) 5 b3 ♘bd7 6 ♖c2 ♗d6 (6...♗e7 More passive, 7 g4?! A sharp new move, although the g4-thrust is common in these type of positions, as we know. 7...h6?! 8 ♖g1 [Tukmakov,V–Wasnetsky,U/Basle SUI 2001](#).) 7 ♗b2 0-0 8 ♗e2 ♖e8 (8...b6 is a perfectly natural move, aiming to develop the queen's bishop, 9 cx d5 cx d5 10 ♘b5 with play along the c-file, [Gurevich,M–Yagupov,I/Batumi GEO 2002](#).) 9 g4!? A Gurevich invention. Of course, we are used to seeing this move in the Slav these days, although normally when the g7-pawn is undefended, see [Gurevich,M–Savchenko,S/Vlissingen NED 1999](#) for the continuation.

3...♘f6 4 ♗g2 ♗g4



Capablanca's Variation is as popular as ever, but there are others:

Lasker's System is also good: 4...♔f5 5 cxd5 I like this line, and recommended it in my book *The Dynamic English*. (5 b3 and the queenside fianchetto is more mainstream—see [A12].) 5...cxd5 6 ♖b3 this is considered in [Kosten,A–Bunzmann,D/Montpellier Masters 2001](#).

4...♘bd7!? The black set-up, whilst rare, is quite sensible— he wants to play...e5 which would reach a reversed 'Geller line vs the Modern (or Pirc)'. 5 cxd5! cxd5 6 ♘c3!? this line is rounded-up in Réti— 4...♘bd7.

4...dxc4 is also possible, 5 0-0 ♘bd7 6 ♖c2 ♘b6 7 a4 a5 8 ♘a3 ♙e6 Black tries to hang-on to his ill-gotten gains, see [Matamoros Franco,C–Xu Jun/Seville ESP 2003](#).

4...g6 Black posts the king's bishop on the long diagonal, whilst keeping the h3–c8 diagonal open for the other bishop, 5 b3 ♙g7 6 ♙b2 0-0 7 0-0 a5!? [Bruzon,L–Nielsen,P/Esbjerg DEN 2003](#).

5 0-0

5 cxd5 cxd5!? A little risky, (5...♙xf3 6 ♙xf3 cxd5 is a more solid way of proceeding.) 6 ♘e5 ♙f5 7 ♘c3 e6 8 g4! is a sharp line that causes Black many problems, [Fernandez Murga,R–Ginzburg,M/Buenos Aires ARG 1999](#).

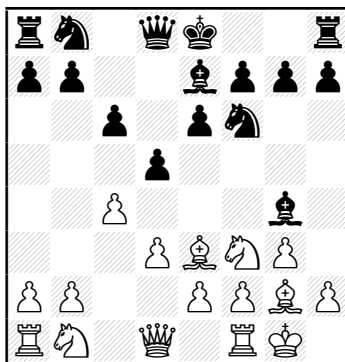
5...e6 6 d3

Currently quite fashionable, but there are others:

6 cxd5 cxd5 7 ♘c3 ♘bd7 8 d3 ♙c5 Other developments of this bishop are also possible, but this is the most active, especially since White is unlikely to play d4, after his eighth move, [Shirov,A–Short,N/Sarajevo BIH 1999](#). Actually, this game came from an accelerated ...♙g4 move-order, and Black played ...c6 as late as possible.

6 b3 followed by ♙b2 is the main line, and is dealt with under code [A12].

6...♙e7 7 ♙e3!?



Pigusov's favourite, the bishop move controls b6, so that Black cannot answer ♖b3 with ...♖b6.

7...♗xf3!

A clever new idea, which certainly seems to be the critical test of this system. Black often has to concede the bishop pair at some point, and exchanging immediately offers certain benefits.

8 ♗xf3 d4

Gaining space with tempo.

9 ♗d2

9 ♗f4?! I don't really see the point of this, as Black's ...e5 will gain a tempo. 9...♗bd7 10 e4?! As in the main game, but this closed position favours Black. 10...e5 11 ♗c1 h5! and Black went on to win in impressive style, [Loginov,V–Grischuk,A/Tomsk RUS 2001](#).

9...a5 10 e4 ♗bd7 11 ♗g2 h5!

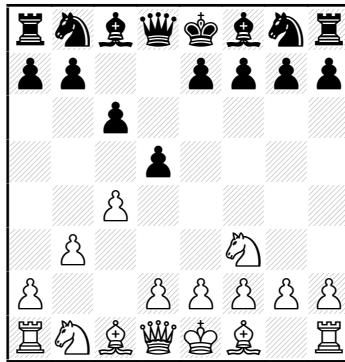
Not played to attack, but rather to stop the white kingside from expanding. The continuation of this instructive game is seen in [Pigusov,E–Zhang,Z/Shanghai CHN 2000](#).

Réti – Capablanca & Lasker with b3

[A12]

Last updated: 06/03/02 by TonyK

1 c4 c6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 b3



Preparing to fianchetto the queen's bishop, and defending the c-pawn.

3... ♗f6 4 g3

Time to fianchetto the king's bishop, too.

Alternatively, 4 ♖b2 ♗g4 5 e3 This anti-Slav system is a speciality of Tony Miles, and contains quite a lot more venom than you might expect. 5...e6 6 ♗e2 (6 h3 ♗h5 7 ♗e2 ♗bd7 8 d3 ♗b4+! equalises, [Kosten,A-Doettling,F/Schott Mainz GER 2001](#)) 6...♗d6 7 h3 ♗xf3 Conceding the bishop pair, after which, although Black has a solid position, White will retain a slight, but enduring, advantage. 8 ♗xf3 0-0 9 d3 [Miles,A-Ledger,A/Birmingham ENG 1999](#).

4... ♗g4

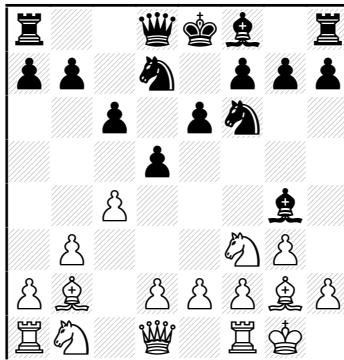
Capablanca's System, once more, this can be compared with codes [A07] and [A11].

Others:

4... ♗f5 5 ♗g2 is a Lasker System.

- 4...♖b6!? One key aspect of this interesting idea is that after 5 ♖b2 the b-pawn is pinned, and 5...dxc4 is strong. Black is about to reveal another more disguised detail. 5 ♖g2 e5! 6 0-0 e4 with a useful space advantage, [Larsen,B-Korchnoi,V/Brussels 1987](#).
- 4...dxc4!? is anti-positional, but there is a tactical follow-up – this is the sort of line a computer plays if you switch off its openings book! 5 bxc4 e5 6 ♘c3 (and not 6 ♘xe5?? ♖d4) 6...e4!? the most aggressive, 7 ♘g5! and White quickly picked-up the e-pawn, see [Malakhov,V-Sutovsky,E/Valle d'Aosta ITA 2002](#).

5 ♖g2 e6 6 ♖b2 ♘bd7 7 0-0



7...♗d6 8 d3

Both players develop their pieces at distance, [Leko,P-Kasparov,G/Wijk aan Zee NED 2001](#).

Réti – ...e6, 4...dxc4 [A13]

Last updated: 03/07/03 by TonyK

1 c4

1 ♖f3 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 transposes.

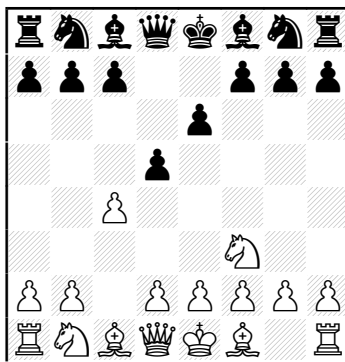
1...e6

A classical reply, aiming for a Catalan set-up, and often preferred by Queen's Gambit players.

2 ♗f3

Alternatives are considered under the English 1 ♗f6.

2...d5



Classical play.

2... ♗f6 3 g3

a) 3... a6!? A favourite of Korchnoi, Black prepares to expand on the queenside. 4 ♗g2 b5
The idea behind ...a6, Black challenges the white c-pawn, and prepares to bring his light-squared bishop to the h1-a8 diagonal. 5 b3 d5 (5... c5 6 0-0 ♗b7 7 ♗c3 ♜a5!? was also instructive, [Akopian,V-Svidler,P/Yerevan ARM 2001.](#)) 6 cxd5!? There is no real need to clarify the centre quite so early, although this is perfectly viable, of course. 6... exd5 7 d4 for the instructive continuation see [Filippov,V-Korchnoi,V/Panormo GRE 2001.](#)

b) 3...b6 4 ♖g2 ♗b7 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♘c3 0-0 Black is clearly happy to play a Queen's Indian Defence, many players would have preferred an early ...c5 to avoid this. 7 ♚e1 (White decides to avoid the QI, 7 d4 ♘e4 with a slight edge to White, and goes for a Hedgehog.) 7...♘e4!? [Gelfand,B–Timman,J/Pamplona ESP 2000](#). (7...c5 8 e4 leads to a Hedgehog, see [A30].)

3 g3

The king's bishop comes to the h1-a8 diagonal.

3 b3 is also possible, and avoids lines where Black captures on c4: 3...♗e7 4 ♗b2 ♗f6!? Black spends a precious tempo to move a bishop for the second time already, because he hopes to nullify the effect of White's counterpart on the long a1 to h8 diagonal, but in this particular dream game the b2–bishop later turns Black's life into a nightmare. (4...♘f6 5 g3 is standard.) 5 ♘c3 ♘e7 6 g4!? g for "go for it" is a favourite attacking motto of Paul Motwani's, and as there were 'two' of them playing here, they must have both been impressed! [Motwani,P–Motwani,P/'Dream Game', January 1999](#).

3 e3 likewise, 3...♘f6 4 b3 ♗e7 5 ♗b2 0-0 6 ♗e2 [Jurkovic,H–Pandurevic,M/Opatija CRO 2003](#).

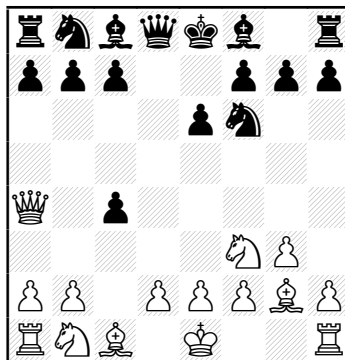
3...♘f6

3...a6!? is unusual, 4 b3 ♘f6 5 ♖g2 ♗e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♗b2 dxc4!? A common idea in main-line Réti's, Black sidesteps the possibility of White playing cxd5 at some point, and plans play along the d–file. 8 bxc4 c5 [Wells,P–Short,N/IECC, Ohrid MKD 2001](#).

4 ♗g2 dxc4

To force White to waste time regaining this pawn.
The most common move, 4...♗e7 is seen in [A14].

5 ♚a4+



5 0-0 ♕e7 6 ♖a4+ should transpose.

5...♗bd7

Is the mainline,

5...c6 is quite popular, and prepares queenside expansion, whilst keeping the h1-a8 diagonal firmly closed until Black is ready to open it himself, 6 ♖xc4 b5 7 ♗b3 ♕b7 8 0-0 ♗bd7 9 d4 Which is fairly level, [Van der Sterren,P–Dautov,R/Porz GER 2001](#).

5...♕d7!? is rarer, 6 ♖xc4 ♕c6 Black plays in Catalan-style, and indeed this would transpose should White play d4, 7 ♗c3 a6 8 0-0 [Lunev,A–Korchnoi,V/Togliatti RUS 2003](#).

6 ♖xc4 a6

6...c5 7 0-0 ♕e7 8 d4 led to Catalan-style play in [Illescas Cordoba,M–Shirov,A/Dos Hermanas ESP 2003](#).

7 ♖c2 c5 8 0-0 b6 9 ♗c3 ♕b7

Black develops his queenside first, much as in the QGA, see [Bu Xiangzhi–Li Wenliang/Qingdao CHN 2002](#).

Réti – ...e6, 4...Be7 [A14]

Last updated: 03/07/03 by TonyK

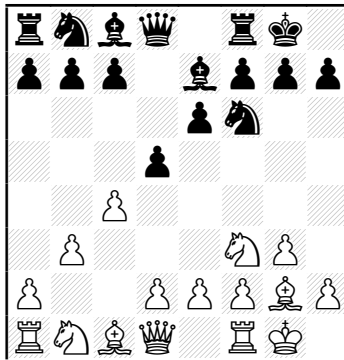
1 c4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 g3

White can also play an early 3 b3 to avoid the possibility of Black capturing on c4 as in [A13].

3...♗f6 4 ♕g2 ♕e7

See [A13] for 4...dxc4

5 0-0 0-0 6 b3



White's flexible double-fianchetto plan here has the advantage of defending the c-pawn.

6...b6

6...c6 is solid, 7 ♕b2 b6 8 ♘c3!? ♕b7 9 ♖c2 [Zvjaginsev,V-Skatchkov,P/Togliatti RUS 2003](#).

7 ♕b2 ♕b7 8 e3 ♗bd7

8...c5 is the classical approach, 9 ♘c3 ♗bd7 10 ♖c2 a6 11 ♖fd1 (I like White's method of playing this position, many players give away their intentions by the move 11 d3 but instead, in this game, White develops his rooks to their best squares, c1 and d1, first,

before deciding how to move his d-pawn.) 11...♖c7 12 ♖ac1 Sorokin,M–Sambuev,B/St Petersburg RUS 1999.

9 d3 c5 10 ♖e2 ♗c7 11 ♘c3 ♖ad8

The most common, and most logical, move played in this position.

With 11...♗c6!? Black aims to nullify White's pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal, 12 ♖fd1 ♖b7 see Sherbakov,R–Aleksandrov,A/Ekaterinburg RUS 2002.

12 e4!?

Miles,A–Godena,M/Nova Gorica SLO 2000,

Very committal, normally White prefers to keep his pawns flexible, and plays either 12 ♖fd1 or 12 ♖ad1